



ESSEX COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Mission

On August 3, 2010, former Governor Deval Patrick signed legislation establishing the Essex County Commission on the Status of Women (ECCSW) to advance the women of Essex County to full equality in all areas of life and to promote women's rights and responsibilities.

Commissioners

Sandy Almonte, *Methuen*
Paula Gomez Stordy, *Middleton*
Rebecca Hallowell, Vice Chair, *Hamilton*
Vilma Martinez-Dominguez, *Lawrence*
Heather McMann, *Haverhill*
Elsabel Rincon, *Peabody*
Sefatia Theken, *Gloucester*
Polly Titcomb, Chair & Secretary, *Swampscott*

Emeritus Commissioners

Linda Anderson-Mercier, *Beverly*
Anne Ferguson (Co-Chair), *Amesbury*

Goals

This year, the ECCSW's goals included appointing new members to the Commission, holding a regional hearing, and conducting informational interviews to gather information about the status of women for this annual report.

Accomplishments

Membership

This year, two commissioners, Linda Anderson-Mercier and Anne Ferguson, reached their maximum years of service under the MCSW's bylaws, which required those commissioners to step down for at least one cycle of appointment. However, because of their significant and ongoing contributions to our commission, we were able to appoint them to "Emeritus" status, which is possible when one serves on the Commission for at least three years, with the support and approval of the MCSW. Therefore, while Linda and Anne can no longer vote as commissioners, they have been able to continue to attend our meetings and offer their skills and passion to the group.

Thanks to the efforts of the MCSW Regional Outreach Coordinator, Kelly Lynch, the ECCSW had several applicants to choose from in order to fill our four vacant seats (two of which were already vacant prior to Linda and Anne stepping down). The ECCSW has been extremely fortunate in being able to appoint three dedicated, intelligent, and accomplished women to our Commission: Heather McMann of Haverhill, Elsabel Rincon of Peabody, and Sefatia Theken of Gloucester. The ECCSW will appoint its last commissioner to our final open seat at our next meeting in June, 2017.

Heather McMann is Executive Director of Groundwork Lawrence. She has over 20 years' experience in the nonprofit sector focusing on building community and individual assets. Throughout her career she has worked to advance the status of women. Among other accomplishments, Heather has worked at Crittenton Hastings House's women's health clinic, the contracts manager for the Oshun Center, Haight Ashbury Free Clinics' 24-hour drop-in center for homeless and struggling low-income women and their families, Peace Games, Women Express/Teen Voices, and Youth Tech Entrepreneurs.

Elsabel Rincon is an experienced community organizer committed to civic engagement to advance the health, safety, and humanity of all. Elsabel is a skilled builder and leader of multidisciplinary teams and community development. In her community work, Elsabel has had a great deal of experience working with survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, and immigrant communities. She has provided local, statewide, and national trainings on serving the immigrant and refugee communities.

Sefatia Romeo Theken is Mayor of the City of Gloucester. Among other impressive accomplishments in this professional role, Mayor Theken has volunteered her time for several years at the Gloucester Fisherman's Wives Association.

Legislative Outreach

This year, the ECCSW adopted the legislative priorities of the MCSW. More than half of the Commission will be in attendance at this year's Advocacy Day on May 17, 2017 in order to support the MCSW's effort in getting this important legislation passed.

Informational Interviews

The ECCSW conducted three informational interviews from those working on the “front lines” as a means to learn about some of the challenges facing Essex County women, children, and families. Summaries of these interviews are provided below in the section entitled “Findings.”

Salem Hearing

The Essex County Commission partnered with the MCSW to co-host a Hearing at Salem State University on November 15, 2016.

Website

Commissioner Paula Gomez-Stordy worked hard this year to launch our first website. The content of the website includes, among other things, monthly meeting dates and agendas, upcoming events, bios of our commissioners, and our annual reports. The ECCSW is in the process of renewing our online presence for another year, and we look forward to increasing our activity on this relatively new site.

MCSW Collaboration

The ECCSW is grateful for the increased and ongoing collaboration with the MCSW. The Regional Outreach Coordinator, Kelly Lynch, and the MCSW Commissioner liaison to the ECCSW, Penny Blaisdell, have contributed to the productive alliance formed between our two commissions.

Findings

Informational Interviews

Elane Lee, Co-Director of Greater Lawrence Family Health Care (“GLFHC”)

- 5 major reasons for homelessness:
 - Medical homelessness (e.g. getting injured at work leads to chronic pain, which leads to the inability to work, which leads to loss of housing);
 - True economic homelessness (e.g. not enough affordable housing units and not enough jobs for the educational level of the population);
 - Domestic Violence
 - 69% of women who are homeless have been raped or had trauma in their background (69% of domestic violence victims report childhood sexual abuse)
 - Often battered families have nowhere to go; victims often face the choice of being housed and fed but battered or homeless and poor with children
 - Women who were abused in childhood are 15 times more likely to abuse alcohol and 9 times more likely to have a substance use disorder.

- More women do drugs than abuse alcohol (it is more socially acceptable for men to be drinking; also, drinking is harder to hide from children)
 - Addiction is a popular way to control women; it makes her dependent, ashamed, unable to leave (addicted, also afraid abuser will inform authorities of her substance abuse and she will lose her children)
 - There are lots of 12 step programs for substance abuse but few for batterers (batterers anonymous has a couple of chapters).
- Substance use
 - Alcohol and substance use disorder are both the cause and effect of homelessness.
 - Homeless individuals often need a clean drug test to get into more stable shelters/housing, which requires access to treatment programs.
 - Treatment requires, among other things, an address, access to insurance, transportation, and the ability to make co-pays, which homeless people generally do not have
- Mental illness
 - Strong connection between homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse
- Other Important Considerations:
 - Studies show that having traumatic experiences prior to the age 18 have a negative impact on physical, mental and emotional health
 - This stress causes instinctual fight-or-flight responses, which physically damage the developing brain and lead to inflammatory changes that increase the potential for many disease states, including physical illness, mental illness, being prone to causing future violence, and being a victim of future violence
 - 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ
 - Many have been kicked out of their home due to gender issues.
 - They have been exposed to higher levels of physical and sexual abuse from caretakers
 - These kids are also exposed to greater victimization while homeless than straight peers.
 - Homeless lesbian youth are more likely to experience PTSD, alcohol and substance use disease than straight homeless girls.
 - LGBTQ are more likely to attempt suicide (62%) than homeless straight peers (29%)
- Best Practices:
 - Trauma-informed approaches: GLFHC realizes that marginalized populations cannot afford health care, and/or do not have the mental health capacity (due to trauma or substance use) to appear at a medical facility when necessary
 - Meet the population where they are:

- GLFHC has mobile health units: sends team to 11 shelters and food pantries in Haverhill and Lawrence weekly for medical visits, free of charge
- Help individuals obtain what they need to get insured (e.g. birth certificate)
- Grants that help defray the co-pay for prescription medications
- Deliver medications to some of the overnight shelters.
- Bi-weekly psychiatric injections and weekly injections for sobriety
 - This will help stabilize the population, which might then be able to secure a job and obtain housing

Jess Andors, Lawrence Community Works (“LCW”)

- Priorities:
 - People:
 - To build community through revitalization
 - Educating people on financial responsibility, home ownership, starting businesses, going back to school, taking English classes
 - Helping immigrants get acclimated
 - Social capital building
 - Parents/school engagement
 - Place: Real estate development; neighborhood development strategy; large-scale adaptive reuse of mill buildings; truly affordable housing
 - Systems Change:
 - Employment
 - Providing employment coaching
 - Addressing health care issues, child care issues, transportation issues, housing issues
 - Language: Stress the importance of hiring Spanish-speaking workforce
 - Training individuals for upward mobility: Training from entry-level jobs to more advanced positions
 - Schools:
 - Changing culture of family engagement in schools
 - Structuring schools so that they are a resource for families and a hub for community and information
- Example of LCW Real Estate Development Model:
 - LCW just opened a 73-unit housing building
 - Over 500 qualified applicants (over 1,000 people applied)
 - Of the 500 applications, over 80% applied for the lower-cost units, which only comprises 30% of the units;
 - There was a much smaller pool for the remaining 60% units, which cost more (3 bedroom = \$1,100/month)
 - Having more housing on lower end of the spectrum is a big need
 - LCW doesn’t require first and last month rent, which makes it more accessible to folks; but they do require a security deposit
- Issues/Challenges/Barriers Facing the Women They Serve:

- Housing:
 - Women-headed households make less money, so they cannot afford quality or secure housing
 - Quality of housing is poor; this creates health issues
 - Lack of reliable heat/air conditioning/plumbing/etc.
 - Inadequate Supply:
 - Population in Lawrence has grown 22%, but housing has only grown 2%
 - This results in very high rental prices
 - Over 40% are paying over half of their incomes in rent
 - Less than 20% of housing stock is for single-family housing, which primarily affects women
 - Communities are not fulfilling their share of affordable housing
- Low Income:
 - Lawrence has lowest income per capita than anywhere in the state
 - Only 30% of the jobs in Lawrence are being filled by residents
 - Higher wage jobs are filled by out-of-town people
 - Residents have to commute for lower-wage jobs
 - Regional transportation is inadequate/ under-resourced
 - Need to build housing near transportation
 - Only 30% of residents own cars
- Affordable Housing Is Generally Still Not Affordable:
 - State law defines what is “affordable” based on area median income
 - In Lawrence, this includes Methuen, Andover, and N. Andover
 - With these towns included in the calculation, the new housing ends up being affordable only for a middle class family
- Women/Individuals who do not earn enough want to qualify for affordable housing, which, on average, is still too expensive for most single-family homes; so this is a disincentive to try to work full time because it would mean your rent would go up or that you would lose a lot of your benefits (the “cliff effect”)
- Best Practices To Help Women Overcome Economic Barriers:
 - Stronger enforcement of the existing building codes
 - Investing more in childcare would be a huge *housing* help because women would then be freed up to work more hours/have more money left over for basic needs
 - Flexibility in work schedules to meet childcare/family needs
 - Poverty-Breaking Programs:
 - Example: Individual Development Account:
 - At or below 200% of federal poverty levels to qualify;
 - must have earned income;
 - must be saving for house, business, or education;

- If these requirements are met, they will match your income 300% (up to a certain amount) for the purchase of a house
- These models help people get out of poverty
 - It is the equivalent to having parental help in a middle class household
- Can't just give housing or one resource for people; have to give people overall education/support because it's all interrelated
- IDA programs could also be created for investment cars, debt management, schooling, and other investments

Mickey Northcutt, CEO, North Shore Community Development Coalition ("NSCDC")

- Mission: NSCDC invests in neighborhoods to create thriving communities through a variety of projects/programs designed to improve quality of life and create empowerment in low-income neighborhoods
- Process:
 - Real Estate Development: NSCDC buys the building and creates housing
 - Affordable Housing: NSCDC rents the units at affordable costs
 - NSCDC provides "low-cost housing" (60% median income)
 - Quarter of units reserved for those at 30% or below median income
 - Reinvest in Neighborhood: NSCDC reinvests their profits in neighborhood revitalization projects, community-based programs
 - Engage local community to determine what the community needs;
 - Create Neighborhood Master Plan
 - Vast majority of those in their programs are not those in residences
 - NSCDC earns its money through real estate, which earns more than it costs; it then reinvests those earnings in community development, which costs much more than it earns
- Who Qualifies:
 - Examples:
 - Single adult: \$20,800/year (\$10/hr FT)
 - Family of 4 with 2 kids: \$57,200/year (\$20/hr FT, \$12/hr PT [25 hours])
 - Single parent with one child: \$32,000/year (Salaried FT teacher's aide)
 - Single parent with two children: \$50,000/year (\$23/hr FT)
 - Flat rent per tier, not by size of household
 - 1 bedroom: \$850-900 (including heat and hot water)
 - 2 bedroom: \$1,100 (including heat and hot water)
 - 3 bedroom: \$1,250-1,300 (including heat and hot water)
- Barriers Facing Women/Families
 - Overwhelming demand for affordable housing is for families
 - 2/3 families are single parents; 80% are women-led households
 - Lack of childcare and affordable childcare, which disproportionately falls on single mothers
 - Not enough Community Development to help people get out of cycle of poverty
 - NSCDC creates these programs, which include:

- ESL programs;
- free tax prep program;
- Resolving voting access issues:
- Creation of more youth programs (there is a serious lack on the North Shore), primarily for young adults who are not finishing high school who are low-income, at risk youth
- Creation of community centers with classrooms;
- Healthy cooking classes;
- Immigration clinics;
- Council on aging (dominos club, dance class, yoga classes)

Salem Hearing

The Essex County Commission partnered with the MCSW to co-host a Hearing at Salem State University on November 15, 2016. In order to elicit the maximum amount of testimony, the ECCSW created a Questionnaire (provided in English, Spanish and Portuguese) for those in attendance to submit to us in addition to or in lieu of offering oral testimony. Attached please find a summary of our Findings from the Salem hearing as well as copies of the Questionnaires submitted to us by members of the public.

Statistical Data

The following statistics have been drafted and generously provided by commissioner, Rebecca Hallowell, through her active role in The Women's Fund of Essex County¹:

Demographics:

- Females are 52% of total population
- 57% of the 65+ population is female
- Age Distribution of Females:
 - < 18: 21%
 - 18-34: 20%
 - 35-64: 41%
 - 65+: 18%
- Median female age is 42.5 years

Marital Status of Females (Ages 15+)

- 31% Never married
- 46% Now married (except separated)
- 2% Separated
- 12% Divorced
- 9% Widowed

¹The Women's Fund of Essex County, Feb. 2017 based on 2014 American Community Survey released September 2016. *See Attached.*

Childbirth & Marriage

- 31% of women who gave birth in past 12 months were unmarried (compare to 31% in 2014 and 38% in 2013)

Place of Birth

- 84% Native born
- 16% Foreign born (of foreign born, 55% are naturalized citizens)

Households:

- Overall Female Householders²
 - 13% of all households
 - 19% of all families
- Latina or Hispanic Female Householder Families
 - 39% of all female householder families
 - 44% of all Latino families
- Black or African American Female Householder Families
 - 6% of all female householder families
 - 35% of all Black or African American (alone) Families: 35%
- Asian Female Householder Families:
 - 3% of all female householder families
 - 15% of all Asian families

Total Families with Own Children³

- Overall Female householder with their own children:
 - 58% of female householder families
 - 26% of all families with children
- Latina or Hispanic Female Householder Families
 - 53% of all female householder families
 - 35% of Latino families
- Black or African American (alone) Female Householder Families
 - 7% of all female householder families
 - 23% of all Black or African American Families

Average Family Size

- Married Couple: 3.3 people
- Male Householder: 2.9 people
- Female Householder: 3.2 people

Households which Own Their Own Home vs. Rent

- 64% of all families own; 36% rent
- 39% of all female householders; 61% rent
 - Females Ages 35-64: 56% rent
 - Females Ages 65+: 27% rent

² Householder = Head of Household

³ Children include those who are related and who are under 18 years of age.

Median Family Income

- \$35,183 Female Householder families (compare with \$53,250 for Male Householder families)
- \$25,530 Female Householder families with children (compare with \$43,258 for Male Householder families)

Women & Poverty: Generally

- 59% of the population living below the poverty level (100% of Poverty Level) are women and girls
 - 26% are Female Householder families
 - 67% of Female Householder families are single mothers with children; 37% are below the poverty line
 - 33% are Female Householder families without children; 6% are below the poverty line
- 60% of the “poorest poor” (50% of poverty level) are women and girls
- 59% of the population living below 125% of the poverty level are women and girls

Women, Poverty & Race/Ethnicity (single race/ethnicity)

- Highest total number of women in poverty are white women
- Highest rates of poverty are: Latina women (28.5%), Black Women (27.7%)

Children in Families Living Below the Poverty Level

- 17% of all children in families
- Of all children who live in poverty, 69% live in Female Householder families

Public Assistance in Last 12 Months (SSI, cash, &/ or Food Stamps/SNAP benefits)

- 60% of children in Female Householder families (compare with 37% of those in Male Householder families)

Percentage of Female Householder Families (With Children <18) Living below Poverty Level by Nativity

- Total: 36.6%
- Native: 34.3%
- Foreign Born: 41.6%
- Naturalized: 26.4%
- Non-Citizen: 61.2%

Families by Race & Ethnic Origin by Poverty

- White:
 - 52% of Female Householder Families
 - 17% live below poverty line
- Black:
 - 6% of Female Householder Families
 - 34% live below poverty line
- Asian:

- 3% of Female Householder Families
- 11% live below poverty line
- Hispanic/Latino/a
 - 39% of Female Householder Families
 - 39% live below poverty line

Median Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers

- On average, Females earn 79% of what Males do
- Native born Females earn 83% compared to their Male counterparts
- Foreign Born/Naturalized Female citizens make 65% compared to their Males counterparts
- Foreign Born/Non-Citizen Females make 40% compared to Men's average median earnings

Work Hours Per Week (Ages 16-64)

- 35+ Hours/Week: 49% females (68% males)
- 15-24 Hours/Week: 22% females (13% males)
- 1-4 Hours/Week: 6% females (3% males)
- Did Not Work: 23% females (16% males)

Mean Hours Worked Per Week

- Females: 34
- Males: 40

Summary of Educational Attainment and Poverty Rate by Head of Household

	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Some College	High School Degree	< High School Degree	HS Degree or Less	Overall Poverty Rate
Female Householders	20%	32%	29%	19%	48%	26%

Female Households & Single Mothers in Poverty in Essex County

City	Female Householders		Single Mothers with Related Children < 18		Single Mothers in Poverty	
	Total	% of Families	Total	% of Female Householders	Total	% in Poverty
Essex County	36,666	19%	21,424	58%	8,927	37%
Lynn	5,952	29%	3,811	64%	1,863	49%
Lawrence	7,717	46%	5,900	76%	2,880	49%
Haverhill	3,743	25%	2,579	69%	980	38%
Peabody	2,373	18%	1,318	56%	369	28%
Methuen	2,514	20%	1,674	67%	496	30%
Salem	2,769	28%	1,843	67%	637	35%
Gloucester	1,255	16%	786	63%	175	22%

Beverly	1,690	18%	1,008	60%	233	23%
Amesbury	750	17%	475	63%	94	20%
NBPT	664	15%	356	54%	70	20%

Poverty Rate for Population Ages 25+ by Educational Attainment

City	< HS Degree	HS Degree or Equal	Some College or Associates	Bachelor's or Higher
Lawrence	36.0%	29.9%	17.7%	26.1%
Lynn	36.6%	11.0%	20.9%	6.8%
Salem	41.2%	18.3%	14.5%	6.3%
Haverhill	29.7%	12.7%	8.8%	4.3%
Methuen	28.5%	11.8%	7.9%	3.6%
Peabody	23.9%	13.0%	8.1%	4.6%

Female Householder Housing Tenure

City	Female Householder Housing Tenure	
	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied
Lawrence	17%	83%
Lynn	27%	73%
Salem	32%	68%
Haverhill	37%	63%
Methuen	48%	52%
Peabody	54%	46%

Conclusions

- Housing:
 - The cost of housing is a leading barrier preventing women in Essex County from improving their economic status and quality of life
 - The lack of affordable housing options requires a disproportionate number of female-lead households to spend nearly half of their income on rent
 - This issue is compounded by the cost of childcare and their financial responsibilities to their child(ren)
 - Affordable Housing Is Generally Still Not Affordable:
 - State law defines what is “affordable” based on area median income
 - In Lawrence, this includes Methuen, Andover, and N. Andover
 - With these towns included in the calculation, the new housing often ends up being affordable only for a middle class family
 - Women who are close to earning enough to be disqualified from affordable housing may not seek additional work for this reason; this is a disincentive for individuals to try to work full time or earn more because it means increased rent and/or a loss of benefits

- There are a lack of programs to assist individuals in purchasing a home in order to build their “asset wealth” (i.e. a financial safety net) instead of being forced to rent for the foreseeable future
 - This issue disproportionately affects women because more women rent housing than men; they receive lower average incomes than men on average; and they are disproportionately raising dependent children as a single parent
- While programs like NSCDC are wonderful assets to the Essex County Community in that they provide affordable rental housing and community development to marginalized populations, it is not structured to address the crisis of a lack of affordable home ownership options in the County
 - The non-profit affordable rental housing model is not necessarily setting people up to succeed/have upward mobility, which is ultimately what breaks the cycle of poverty
 - The State does not provide funding to non-profits to build affordable housing for ownership; non-profits are constrained by what kind of funding they can get, and it is currently structured for them to become landlords
- Greater Need for Poverty-Breaking Programs:
 - Example: Individual Development Account
 - Individuals must: be at or below 200% of federal poverty levels to qualify; be earning income; be saving for house, business, or education
 - If these requirements are met, the agency will match your income by 300% (up to a certain amount) for the purchase of a house, educational loan, etc.
 - This assistance, which is the equivalent to having parental help in a middle class household, helps people break the cycle of poverty by providing assistance to building asset wealth
 - Agencies cannot just give housing or another resource for individuals in need because their barriers to upward mobility are all interrelated
 - Must offer support for childcare, education, etc.
 - IDA programs should be created not just for housing, but for cars, debt management, schooling, and other investments
- Increase Community-Based Programs
 - NSCDC provides an excellent model for building more community-based programs – they hold meetings with the residences of the towns they are building in to become informed on what kinds of services are needed in the neighborhood/town/city
 - 2/3 of their renters are single family households, and 80% of those are led by women; therefore, their affordable housing model is disproportionately benefiting women and their dependent children, not only because of the housing they provide, but also the services they provide to those neighborhoods, including cooking classes, assistance with tax preparation, youth programs for teens who have not completed high school (which have 100% success rate)

- These types of programs (and the affordable housing projects that make them possible) offer women opportunities to improve the status of their lives by providing free services to them, and the public at large
- Domestic Violence
 - Domestic violence remains a major concern in Essex County, as well as across the state and nationally
 - Domestic violence greatly increases homelessness and substance abuse and substance dependence in women, and creates a vicious cycle in which women feel trapped
 - On average, a woman tries to leave an abuser 7 times before she actually succeeds in moving out for good
 - Essex County should provide 12-step programs for batterers in the same way we do for those suffering from substance abuse; Batterers Anonymous has a few chapters, but is not a part of our social fabric like, for example, AA
- Higher Education Support
 - Young women today are attending community college, college and graduate schools at higher rates than they have attended previously (as well as at higher rates than young men)
 - Support in the form of childcare services and other economic assistance would help women complete their education in the short term, and in the long term it would greatly increase their chance for upward mobility and economic stability over the course of their lives
- Increase The “Trauma-Based” Approach To Providing Assistance
 - Individuals who are victims of domestic violence, suffer from mental illness, and/or are homeless, are substantially more likely to have experienced early childhood and/or adulthood traumas that impact their ability to seek out the assistance they need to break their cycle of suffering; we cannot expect such populations to have the mental and/or emotional capacity to fit into the framework of “regular” society that is functional for most people
 - As a result, we need more programs like the ones offered by GLFHC – where we meet the population where they are, and where we do not expect them to come seek help
 - Example: include mobile hospital service vans that go to areas where homeless people gather/live to provide free services
- Increase Funding For Addiction Treatment & Mental Health Facilities
 - Programs like Gloucester’s “Angel” Program where, when an addict comes into the Gloucester Police station and asks for help, an officer will take him/her to a local hospital, where they will be paired with someone to guide them through the process of recovery; they will not be arrested, charged with a crime, or jailed
- Gender Inequality Affects Women’s Upward Mobility
 - Women’s median earnings are lower than men’s across every sector (including public sectors)
 - Occupations in which women are the majority of workers tend to be the lower or lowest paying occupations for women

- Although a small percentage of the occupation, women's salaries have jumped significantly in Protective Services as well as Natural Resources, Construction & Maintenance (especially Installation, Repair & Maintenance), probably as a result of union wage comparability and affirmative hiring.
- On average, women worked fewer weeks and/or fewer hours per week than men
 - This may be because child care and/or parent care issues, which fall disproportionately on women; lack of available work; inadequate schooling/training (often because of being a single mother); or choice

Goals for 2016-2017

- Continue to become a more fully operational Commission, which will create the stability needed to accomplish our mission and goals
- Advocate our legislative priorities to elected officials and other lobbying groups; potentially organizing a legislative breakfast
- Interview local non-profits to become better informed about the most pressing issues facing women in Essex County; get testimony through these organizations
- Become a better and more effective bridge for local organizations studying women's issues/advocating for positive change in their Essex County communities. Ways to accomplish this goal include:
 - informing them about our legislative priorities;
 - linking them to other local organizations;
 - assisting with and attending their hearings/educational forums; and
 - distributing their information to local legislators/other activist groups to help spread the data on the status of women in Essex County
- Inform leaders of business, education, healthcare, municipalities and communications media on issues pertaining to women in Essex County
- Write Op-Eds in various local papers
- Facilitate ongoing collaboration with the MCSW and increased collaboration with other regional Commissions
- Continue to study and report on the status of women in Essex County

Submitted by Polly Titcomb on May 11, 2017